

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) At a first network authority connected to a network environment, a super authority and one or more other network authorities also being connected to the network environment, each network authority configured to authenticate a subset of principals that access the network environment through different domains, Aa method of authenticating a principal in a—the network environment, wherein the principal's account identifier is configured for authentication at a network authority from among the first network authority and the one or more other network authorities, the method comprising:

receiving at an—the first authority a login request from the principal, wherein the login request comprises an account identifier identifying the principal;

transmitting the account identifier from the receiving first authority to a—the super authority for identification of an authority that is authorized to authenticate the principal based on the account identifier; and

the first network authority receiving from the super authority an indication of a selected network authority, selected from among the first network authority and the one or more other network authorities, that is authorized to authenticate the principal based on the account identifier; and

the first network authority transferring the login request to the selected network authority for processing, even if the selected network authority is one of the one or more other network authorities

~~authenticating the principal at the receiving authority if a transmission is received at the receiving authority from the super authority indicating that the receiving authority is authorized to authenticate the principal, and otherwise abstaining from authentication of the principal.~~

2. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the account identifier comprises a principal identifier and a namespace identifier.

3. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, wherein the first network authority authenticates the principal based on the first network authority being the selected network authority ~~further comprising receiving at the receiving authority from the super authority a request to authenticate a second principal based on a login request made by the second principal, wherein the login request made by the second principal was made by the requesting principal to another authority other than the receiving authority.~~

4. (Currently Amended) A system, comprising:
system memory;
one or more processors; and
one or more recordable-type computer-readable media having stored there one
computer-executable instructions of a controlling authority for identifying an authenticating
authority for authenticating a principal for access to network resources, the controlling authority
comprising:

an identity catalog, the identity catalog mapping at least one account ID of at least one principal to an identifier of a corresponding authenticating authority; and

an authority resolution module for accessing the identity catalog to match the account ID based on the identity of the principal with a corresponding authenticating authority and for causing an authentication request to be directed to the corresponding authenticating authority.

5. (Currently Amended) The system ~~controlling authority~~ according to claim 4, further comprising a network interface for passing the account ID to the authority resolution module and for receiving from the authority resolution module an authentication request directed to the corresponding authenticating authority.

6. (Currently Amended) The system ~~controlling authority~~ according to claim 4, wherein the identity catalog maps a plurality of account IDs to a corresponding plurality of authenticating authorities.

7. (Currently Amended) The system ~~controlling authority~~ according to claim 6, wherein each account ID comprises a namespace identifier, and wherein the plurality of account IDs comprises at least two account IDs having a common namespace identifier, wherein the at least two account IDs are mapped to at least two different respective ones of the plurality of authenticating authorities.

8. (Currently Amended) The system ~~controlling authority~~ according to claim 6, wherein each account ID comprises a namespace identifier, and wherein the plurality of account IDs comprises at least two account IDs having different namespace identifiers, wherein the at least two account IDs are mapped to the same one of the plurality of authenticating authorities.

9. (Currently Amended) The system ~~controlling authority~~ according to claim 6, wherein the content of the identity catalog is based at least in part on the organizational affiliation of principals within an entity.

10. (Currently Amended) The system ~~controlling authority~~ according to claim 6, wherein the content of the identity catalog is based at least in part on the geographical location of principals.

11. (Original) At a super authority connected to a network environment, an assigned authenticating authority and one or more other authenticating authorities also being connected to the network environment, each authenticating authority configured to authenticate of subset of principals that access the network environment through different domains, A a method of controlling authentication of principals for access to network resources in a network environment, wherein the principal's account identifier is configured for authentication at an authenticating authority from among the assigned authenticating authority and the one or more other authenticating authorities, the method comprising:

receiving at the super authority a request for an authenticating authority resolution from one of a plurality of authenticating authorities, wherein the request comprises an account ID of a principal to be authenticated;

accessing an assignment mapping of that maps each account ID in a plurality of account IDs to a corresponding plurality of authenticating authorities that can be used to authenticate the account ID, the account ID comprising the identity of the principal and locating within the mapping the account ID of the principal to be authenticated;

locating within the mapping an identity of an assigned authenticating authority from among the one or more authenticating authorities that is mapped corresponds to the account ID of the principal to be authenticated; and

causing an authentication request to be transmitted to the assigned authenticating authority located from among the one or more authenticating authorities, the assigned authenticating authority having been located using the principal's account ID, wherein

the request asks the assigned authenticating authority to authenticate the principal ~~to be~~ authenticated.

12. (Original) The method according to claim 11, wherein each account ID comprises a namespace identifier, and wherein the plurality of account IDs comprises at least two account IDs having a common namespace identifier, wherein the at least two account IDs are mapped to at least two different respective ones of the plurality of authenticating authorities via the assignment mapping.

13. (Original) The method according to claim 11, wherein each account ID comprises a namespace identifier, and wherein the plurality of account IDs comprises at least two account IDs having different namespace identifiers, wherein the at least two account IDs are mapped to the same one of the plurality of authenticating authorities via the assignment mapping.

14. (Original) The method according to claim 11, further comprising altering the assignment mapping whereby an account ID previously mapped to a first authenticating authority is remapped to a second authenticating authority.

15. (Original) The method according to claim 11, wherein the assignment mapping is based at least in part on the organizational affiliation of principals within an entity.

16. (Original) The method according to claim 11, wherein the assignment mapping is based at least in part on the geographical location of principals.

17. (Currently Amended) At a super authority connected to a network environment, an assigned authenticating authority and one or more other authenticating authorities also being connected to the network environment, each authenticating authority configured to authenticate of subset of principals that access the network environment through different domains, Aan apparatus for controlling authentication of principals for access to network resources in a network environment, wherein the principal's account identifier is configured for authentication at an authenticating authority from among the assigned authenticating authority and the one or more other authenticating authorities, the method comprising:

means for receiving at the super authority a request for an authenticating authority resolution from one of a plurality of authenticating authorities, wherein the request comprises an account ID of a principal to be authenticated;

means for accessing an assignment mapping ~~of that maps each account ID and a~~ plurality of account IDs to a corresponding plurality of authenticating authorities that can be used to authenticate the account ID, the account ID comprising the identity of the principal ~~and for locating within the mapping the account ID of a principal to be authenticated;~~

means for locating within the mapping an identity of an assigned authenticating authority from among the one or more authenticating authorities ~~that is mapped~~ corresponds to the account ID of a the principal to be authenticated; and

means for causing an authentication request to be transmitted to the assigned authenticating authority located from among the one or more authenticating authorities, the assigned authenticating authority having been located using the principal's account

ID, wherein the request invites the assigned authenticating authority to authenticate the principal ~~to be authenticated~~.

18. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 17, wherein each account ID comprises a namespace identifier, and wherein the plurality of account IDs comprises at least two account IDs having a common namespace identifier, wherein the at least two account IDs are mapped to at least two different respective ones of the plurality of authenticating authorities via the assignment mapping.

19. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 17, wherein each account ID comprises a namespace identifier, and wherein the plurality of account IDs comprises at least two account IDs having different namespace identifiers, wherein the at least two account IDs are mapped to the same one of the plurality of authenticating authorities via the assignment mapping.

20. (Original) The apparatus according to claim 17, further comprising means for altering the assignment mapping whereby an account ID previously mapped to a first authenticating authority is remapped to a second authenticating authority.

21. (Currently Amended) At a super authority connected to a network environment, an assigned authenticating authority and one or more other authenticating authorities also being connected to the network environment, each authenticating authority configured to authenticate of subset of principals that access the network environment through different domains, A a recordable-type computer-readable medium having thereon computer-executable instructions for performing a method of controlling authentication of principals for access to network resources in a network environment, wherein the principal's account identifier is configured for authentication at an authenticating authority from among the assigned authenticating authority and the one or more other authenticating authorities, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving at the super authority a request for an authenticating authority resolution from one of a plurality of authenticating authorities, wherein the request comprises an account ID of a principal to be authenticated;

accessing an assignment mapping ~~of~~ that maps each account ID and a plurality of account IDs to a corresponding plurality of authenticating authorities that can be used to authenticate the account ID, the account ID comprising the identity of the principal and ~~locating within the mapping the account ID of the principal to be authenticated;~~

locating within the mapping an identity of an assigned authenticating authority from among the one or more authenticating authorities that is mapped corresponds to the account ID of the principal to be authenticated; and

causing an authentication request to be transmitted to the assigned authenticating authority located from among the one or more authenticating authorities, the assigned authenticating authority having been located using the principal's account ID, wherein

the request asks the assigned authenticating authority to authenticate the principal ~~to be~~ authenticated.

22. (Currently Amended) The recordable-type computer-readable medium according to claim 21, wherein each account ID comprises a namespace identifier, and wherein the plurality of account IDs comprises at least two account IDs having a common namespace identifier, wherein the at least two account IDs are mapped to at least two different respective ones of the plurality of authenticating authorities via the assignment mapping.

23. (Currently Amended) The recordable-type computer-readable medium according to claim 21, wherein each account ID comprises a namespace identifier, and wherein the plurality of account IDs comprises at least two account IDs having different namespace identifiers, wherein the at least two account IDs are mapped to the same one of the plurality of authenticating authorities via the assignment mapping.

24. (Currently Amended) The recordable-type computer-readable medium according to claim 21, wherein the assignment mapping is based at least in part on the organizational affiliation of principals within an entity.

25. (Currently Amended) The recordable-type computer-readable medium according to claim 21, wherein the assignment mapping is based at least in part on the geographical location of principals.